

## POSTPRINT

Heidrun Kämper

### Telling the Truth: Counter-Discourses in Diaries under Totalitarian Regimes (Nazi Germany and Early GDR)

#### I Introduction

‘To write is strictly forbidden, even so I do it. When I still was free and could write whenever and as much as I wanted, I often doubted the sense of this activity; now I consider it a huge personal relief. The written word benevolently isolates me from the naked experience of detention.’<sup>1</sup> Luise Rinser, German poet, noted this as a prisoner on remand in 1944. ‘In the first place, it [diary-writing] is a means of concentrating my thoughts and energy on literature . . . A kind of self-protection.’<sup>2</sup> Nico Rost, Dutch prisoner in Dachau, sought to liberate himself from hell by writing a diary. The purpose was to maintain distance by putting the horror into words.

These short quotations from Luise Rinser and Nico Rost show what diary-writing can mean under totalitarian conditions. As texts of extreme privacy, diaries document the most intimate feelings, thoughts, and desires as well as the basic experiences of human existence. Written under totalitarian regimes, diaries can help their authors to overcome situations of life-threatening pressure. In this regard, diary-writing in custody may be seen as the prototype of ‘diaristics’ because nowhere else does writing take

<sup>1</sup> Luise Rinser, *Gefängnistagebuch* (Frankfurt, 1973), 17, entry for 22 Oct. 1944: ‘Es ist streng verboten zu schreiben. Ich tue es trotzdem. Als ich noch frei war und schreiben konnte, wann und so oft ich wollte, habe ich oft am Sinn dieser Tätigkeit gezweifelt; jetzt halte ich es für eine große persönliche Wohltat. Das Wort schiebt sich gnädig isolierend zwischen mich und das nackte Erlebnis der Haft.’ All translations in the text are my own; the original German is given in the footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> Nico Rost, *Goethe in Dachau: Ein Tagebuch*, ed. Wilfried F. Schoeller (Munich, 2001), 110: ‘An erster Stelle ist es [Tagebuchschreiben] ein Mittel, um meine Gedanken und meine Energie auf die Literatur zu konzentrieren . . . Eine Art Selbstschutz.’

place in such an isolated situation—assuming, of course, that the diarist is not a member or supporter of the system.

For diarists who did not conform with the National Socialist regime, their diaries gave them a chance to speak the truth. For them, totalitarian regimes were predicated upon lying. Theodor Haecker, a member of the conservative German resistance and the intellectual father of the students' resistance group *Weißer Rose*, commented on the lies of the Nazis in his diary: 'How little truth human beings need for life—and how many lies! *Nescis mi fili, quam multis mendiciis regitur mundus*. [You do not know, my son, by how many lies the world is governed.]'<sup>3</sup> Haecker's next entry concerns the voices that transmit these lies: 'Their voices, my God, their voices! Their betrayal overwhelms me again and again. Most dreadful is their extinction. Sounding masks of human voices. . . . In the desert of a proud godforsakenness: death, plague, and lies.'<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the world created in diaries under totalitarianism can be regarded as a counter-world to lying. 'Telling the truth' is a leitmotiv of diary-writing under dictatorships. However, there are different motivations for writing. These can be reconstructed from the text because authors themselves often reflect on their own motives for noting down their experiences and perceptions. Diary-writers feel a strong responsibility to record the truth, irrespective of whether their impulses originate in individual feelings or external pressures.

Walter Tausk, a Jewish commercial traveller living in Breslau, kept a diary until 1940. In 1941 he was deported to Kowno, where all trace of him disappears. He was one of the observers of reality: 'More and more seeps out about this day [of the boycott of Jewish shops] and its consequences, and since all this is not allowed to be published in the newspapers, it shall herewith be preserved for posterity.'<sup>5</sup> Tausk was a highly self-conscious diarist, and the disastrous

<sup>3</sup> Theodor Haecker, *Tag- und Nachtbücher 1933–1945*, ed. Hinrich Siefken (Innsbruck, 1989), 50, entry for 20 Apr. 1940: 'Wie wenig Wahrheit braucht der Mensch zum Leben—und wieviel Lüge! *Nescis mi fili, quam multis mendiciis regitur mundus*.'

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 'Ihre Stimmen, mein Gott, ihre Stimmen! Immer neu überwältigt mich ihr Verrat. Am furchtbarsten ist ihre Ausgestorbenheit. Tönende Masken menschlicher Stimmen . . . Tod, Pest, Lüge in der Wüste einer stolzen Gottverlassenheit!' 20 April 1940 was Hitler's 51st birthday, and Haecker was probably listening to the speeches broadcast on the radio on this occasion.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Tausk, *Breslauer Tagebuch 1933–1940*, afterword by Henryk M. Broder (Leipzig 1995), 47, entry for 14 Apr. 1933: 'Es sickert immer mehr durch von diesem Tage [des "Judenboykotts"] und seinen Folgen, und da das alles nicht in die Zeitungen kommen darf, soll es hiermit der Nachwelt überliefert werden.'



environment forced him, like other diarists under similar conditions, to escape into the inner monologue of his diary. 'I hope that many diaries from this time survive for posterity. Written unvarnished—so that subsequent generations can gain a clear picture of the enormous nonsense which we have witnessed: of the second German Middle Ages.'<sup>6</sup> Six months later, Tausk returned to the same point: 'The truth is unbelievably suppressed, individuals are spied upon, and their freedom limited. . . . It is damned dark in the "New Germany"', he noted, 'although scattered here and there . . . flames are glowing, and one of them is in this diary.'<sup>7</sup>

In addition to a strong commitment to telling the truth, common to all dissident diary-writers under National Socialism, they also shared the view that the practice of writing a diary was a kind of monologue. Ernst Jünger considered it the last possible form of conversation.<sup>8</sup> Other diarists, too, noted the existential relationship between the articulated word and memory. This also formed one of Walter Tausk's motives: 'Soon one will only be able to talk to oneself, and then the diary attains a high value: otherwise one forgets what one asked and answered oneself, and one forgets the questions which the times confronted one with—without giving an answer.'<sup>9</sup>

The counter-world of the diary may consist of worst-case scenarios. As contemporaries watched political developments carefully and critically, they formed views about what to expect and about what parts of the truth the regime was concealing. Prophecies are a characteristic of diary-writing under totalitarianism.<sup>10</sup> Entries

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 65, entry for 25 June 1933: 'Hoffentlich kommen aus der Zeit viele Tagebücher auf die Nachwelt! Ungeschminkt geschrieben—damit andere Generationen ein klares Bild von dem Riesenunfug bekommen, den wir miterlebt haben: vom zweiten deutschen Mittelalter.'

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 107, entry for 21 Jan. 1934: 'Die Wahrheit wird unglaublich unterdrückt, der einzelne ist bespitzelt und in seiner Freiheit eingeschränkt . . . Es ist verflucht finster in "Neu-Deutschland", und doch ist, hier und dort verstreut, etwas Licht . . . hier und dort glimmt irgendeine Flamme weiter—und eine davon ist dieses Tagebuch auch.'

<sup>8</sup> Ernst Jünger, *Strahlungen* (Tübingen, 1949), 8–9: 'das letzte mögliche Gespräch.'

<sup>9</sup> Tausk, *Breslauer Tagebuch*, 86, entry for 8 Aug. 1933: 'es ist bald soweit, daß man nur noch mit sich selber wird reden können, und da gewinnt ein Tagebuch großen Wert: man vergißt sonst, was man sich selbst gefragt und geantwortet hat und welche Fragen einem die Zeit vorlegte—ohne eine Antwort darauf zu geben.'

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Gustav René Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher aus vier Jahrhunderten: Motive und Anthologie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), 196: 'das wahre politische Tagebuch läßt . . . nach einem Begriff von Henri Bergson, eine "offene", auf die Zukunft weisende "Moral" wirksam werden . . . Insofern können Erinnerndes und Erlebtes immer wieder zu einer visionären Vorwegnahme von Zukünftigen führen.'

such as the following are typical: 'One sees the complete ruin and collapse of this "Third Reich", which inevitably rushes into its own catastrophe.' Or 'the Germans . . . will become the objects of the world's disgust'.<sup>11</sup> Prophecies such as these particularly affect readers when authors refer to well-founded presentiments of their own deaths. Walter Tausk foresaw himself as a 'little piece of life beaten to death in this wonderful Third Reich'.<sup>12</sup> Three weeks later he predicted the concentration camp scenario, which probably came true for him: 'Whenever I closed my eyes over these past few weeks, I saw a single image: a bare cell with smooth cement walls. I stood in it: a black cap . . . on my head, wearing a faded brownish-yellow prisoner's uniform, . . . the cloth with thin stripes, stout black military shoes on my feet. So one stands there, immobile.' Tausk was not sure whether this image was the symptom of a 'nervous disease' or evidence of 'second sight for things which might happen if one could not escape from hell'.<sup>13</sup>

It has been shown that the incidence of diary-writing in Germany and German-occupied Europe increased sharply between 1933 and 1945.<sup>14</sup> Provided that the authors were not part of the system, extreme experiences such as imprisonment (Rinser and Rost) or persecution and fear for one's life (Tausk) were typical motives for people to start recording experiences in a diary. Beyond such extreme situations the political system itself could compel contemporaries to write. Above all, diary-writing under totalitarianism was political. Even if a diary concerned only the most private subjects or was intended to be purely introspective, merely the fact that it was written in a dictatorship made it political.<sup>15</sup> Since totalitarian politics intruded into every sphere of life, there was no chance of escape. As a result, diarists included politics in their writing, if only

<sup>11</sup> Tausk, *Breslauer Tagebuch*, 207, entry for 24 June 1939: 'Man sieht den völligen Ruin und Zusammenbruch dieses "Dritten Reiches", das unausweichbar in seine Katastrophe rennt.' Haecker, *Tag- und Nachtbücher*, 28, entry for 13 Dec. 1939: 'Die Deutschen . . . werden der Abscheu der Welt.'

<sup>12</sup> Tausk, *Breslauer Tagebuch*, 195, entry for 20 Jan. 1939: 'als totgeschlagenes Stückchen Leben in diesem wundervollen Dritten Reich.'

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 203-4, entry for 12 Feb. 1939: 'wenn man in diesen vergangenen Wochen zuweilen die Augen schloß, sah man immer nur ein Bild: eine kahle Zelle mit glatten Zementwänden. In ihr stand ich: eine schwarze Mütze . . . auf dem Kopf, eine verwaschene, braungelbe Sträflingsuniform an . . . der Stoff feingestreift, schwarze derbe Militärschuhe an den Füßen. So stand man da, unbeweglich. Nervenstörung? Zweites Gesicht für Dinge, die einem geschehen könnten, falls man nicht aus der Hölle käme?'

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*, 232; see also his list of European diarists between 1933 and 1945, *ibid.* 178.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 232-3.

to free themselves from the subject for the rest of the day: 'Each political entry in the diary demands willpower. But this allows me to get rid of politics for the rest of the day.'<sup>16</sup>

The loss of family members, friends, or property during the war was another reason for recording one's feelings. Hans Erich Nossack, for example, a writer and the heir to his father's firm in Hamburg, lost his financial existence in the big air raid on Hamburg of July 1943. He lost the family business, his manuscripts, and his diaries. Starting a new diary, Nossack thought about it as a 'loss of the past': 'Should it be granted me to grow to love this book with the same intensity that I hated the four or five preceding books—those that are lost, and whose loss I find so hard to bear, despite my hatred of them, that it sometimes threatens to pull me down with it—that would be good. Then, the complete loss of my past would be a mercy.'<sup>17</sup>

The heterogeneity of diaries prevents any classification, but there are similarities of function, subject matter, and circumstance of writing. Diaries are one of the most individual types of text, and they continued to be so under totalitarianism. Nevertheless, to some extent totalitarianism provides a unifying background. It is the political subject that engages the most diverse diary-writers. These conditions require that research on diaries must take into account the individuality of the diaries' authors as well as the external circumstances under which the texts are produced.

Diaries have their origin in the most intimate sphere of a human being's life—they belong to the text type of the self. Those who attempt to classify 'diaries' as a text type agree that they are a particular kind of monologue, a soliloquy.<sup>18</sup> In addition, diaries

<sup>16</sup> René Schickele, *Tagebücher 1918–1934*, 3 vols. (Cologne, 1953), iii, 1,110, entry for 8 May 1934: 'Jede politische Eintragung in das Tagebuch kostet mich Selbstüberwindung. Aber auf diese Weise werde ich die Politik für den Rest des Tages los.'

<sup>17</sup> Hans Erich Nossack, *Die Tagebücher 1943–1977*, ed. Gabriele Söhling, afterword by Norbert Miller, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), i, 12, entry for 23 Feb. 1944: 'Sollte es mir noch vergönnt sein, daß ich dieses Buch so liebgewinne, wie ich die vier oder fünf vorhergehenden Bücher haßte, sie, die verloren gingen und deren Verlust mir so unbegreiflich schwer ist, trotz meines Hasses, so schwer, daß er mich manchmal mit hin-abziehen will,—das wäre gut. Dann wäre der völlige Verlust meiner Vergangenheit eine Gnade.'

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Wladimir Admoni, *Die Tagebücher der Dichter in sprachlicher Sicht* (Mannheim, 1988), 15: 'Das Tagebuch dient einer sonderbaren, aber überaus wichtigen Kommunikationsart. Es dient namentlich der Kommunikation des Menschen mit sich selbst.' See also Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*; Herbert Kraft, "'Neue" Prosa von Kafka: Mit einer Theorie der Textsorte "Tagebuch"', *Seminar*, 19 (1983), 235–45; Helga Hipp, 'Zur formativen Seite bei



written in dictatorships are inevitably political diaries. Political diaries, whose history begins at the end of the eighteenth century,<sup>19</sup> are characterized by the dominance of topical subjects.<sup>20</sup> Personal or individual reflections are correspondingly reduced.<sup>21</sup> This does not mean that the political diary loses its individual character. It remains a very personal type of text with regard to the language used in it.

In the following sections of this essay three diaries will be explored in greater detail. The diaries of Willi Graf and Ulrich von Hassell are two versions of dissident diaries written under Nazi totalitarianism. The diary of Victor Klemperer, on the other hand, was written under conditions of persecution and oppression. It was continued after 1945 during a period of adjustment to the new regime of the Soviet occupied zone and the early GDR.

## II *Diary-Writing under the Sign of Resistance: The Diaries of Willi Graf and Ulrich von Hassell*

Although in general all diaries written under totalitarianism are political we can distinguish different degrees. Apart from official

Tagebucheintragungen: Anmerkungen zu Arbeits- und Lebensjournalen', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 89 (1988), 573–82; Kirsten Adamzik, *Textlinguistik: Eine Einführung* (Tübingen, 2004), 114; Wolfgang Heinemann and Dieter Viehweger, *Textlinguistik: Eine Einführung* (Tübingen 1991), 139 and 244.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*, 164: 'After the "critical" diaries since the Renaissance, the beginning of the French Revolution saw the emergence of "protest" journals, that is, since the Romantic period. Their "protests", however, generally did not reach the public, but were written in worried seclusion and kept anxiously hidden' ('Nach den "krütschen" Diarien seit der Renaissance entstanden mit dem Beginn der Französischen Revolution, also seit der Romantik, die "Protest"-Journale, deren "Protest" jedoch meist nicht an die Öffentlichkeit drang, sondern in sorgender Verborgenheit geschrieben und in ängstlichem Versteck gehalten wurde').

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 243: 'The "modern" political diary . . . is critical of current events. Ethical value-neutrality in the pseudo-Machiavellian sense is abandoned: self-criticism turns into moralistic criticism of current events ('Das "moderne" politische Tagebuch wird . . . ein zeitkritisches Tagebuch. Die ethische Wertneutralität im pseudo-macchiavellistischen Sinne wird aufgegeben: aus der Selbstkritik wird moralistische Zeitkritik').

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 194: 'The political diary . . . [registers] political events or [describes] political individuals without introspection and with merely restrained personal views. . . . As a true diary that aims to be more than a calendar-based chronicle, the political diary too must be "revealing" more than merely descriptive' ('Das politische Tagebuch . . . [verzeichnet] ohne Introspektion mit lediglich gedämpften persönlichen Betrachtungen politische Ereignisse oder [schildert] politische Persönlichkeiten. . . . Als echtes Tagebuch, das mehr sein will als kalendrische Chronik, muß auch das politische Tagebuch mehr "enthüllen", als bloß beschreiben').



diaries such as, for example, those written by Hitler's Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels,<sup>22</sup> the most political diaries written under dictatorships are probably those by dissident authors.<sup>23</sup> The spectrum which diaries written under conditions of dictatorship can cover is illustrated by the diary of Willi Graf on the one hand and that of Ulrich von Hassell on the other. They can be seen as extremely different with regard to biographical conditions and functional implications—under the unifying sign of resistance.

Willi Graf was a member of the resistance movement *Weißer Rose*, a group of students who assembled in Munich in 1941, outraged by the cruel and brutal war.<sup>24</sup> Aiming to protest, and to enlighten and wake up their contemporaries, they distributed leaflets under the symbol of the white rose (the title of a novel by B. Traven, published in 1931). In summer 1942 Willi Graf, born in 1918, met the founder Hans Scholl, and Graf joined the group. He wrote and distributed leaflets and painted anti-fascist slogans on house walls. He was arrested on 15 February 1943, sentenced to death on 19 April, and executed on 12 October.

Ulrich von Hassell, born in 1881, was a civilian member of the bourgeois, national conservative resistance movement.<sup>25</sup> This movement was led by Carl Goerdeler, and its membership included, among others, Ludwig Beck, Johannes Popitz, Jens Jessen, Carl Langbehn, Wilhelm Leuschner, and Jakob Kaiser. They were all experienced men who saw themselves as a counter-elite to the National Socialist leaders. Members described themselves as the 'secret', the 'other', or the 'honourable Germany',

<sup>22</sup> Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*, 182, calls it the 'lemur diary' ('Lemuren-Tagebuch') of the 'downright existential denunciation type' ('geradezu existentiellen Denunzianten-Typus').

<sup>23</sup> In this respect the dissident diary is a first-rate political diary when it is 'true': 'The first-rate political diary is . . . true only when it de-ideologizes history and alienates "diplomatic" secrets' ('Das politische Tagebuch von Rang ist . . . nur dann wahr, wenn in ihm Geschichte ent-ideologisiert wird, wenn "diplomatische" Geheimnisse entfremdet werden'), *ibid.* 195. Thus the political diary is characterized by 'the courage to reveal the entirety of one's own knowledge' ('Mut zur Preisgabe des gesamten eigenen Wissens'). This courage derives from an elementary recklessness. 'One single methodological quality is decisive if a political diary is to attain historical value: fearless exposure' ('Eine einzige methodische Qualität ist entscheidend, wenn ein politisches Tagebuch historischen Rang erhalten soll: die Unerschrockenheit der Bloßlegung'), *ibid.* 194.

<sup>24</sup> See Wolfgang Benz and Walter H. Pehle, *Lexikon des deutschen Widerstandes* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 316–21.

<sup>25</sup> Members of this movement belonged to the university-educated upper classes, and some were employed by the regime. See Hans Mommsen, 'Bürgerlicher (nationalkonservativer) Widerstand', in Benz and Pehle, *Lexikon des deutschen Widerstandes*, 55–67.

the 'front of the clear-sighted', the 'good ones', the 'good-minded', or the 'band of brothers'.<sup>26</sup> Although they were a heterogeneous group in terms of biographical background, political objectives, and interests, they all shared one ambitious aim, namely, to overthrow the Nazi government.<sup>27</sup> Their plan was not a polished homogeneous strategy right from the start, but changed as the war progressed. At first they wanted merely to achieve a government reshuffle; the final objective, however, was to provoke a coup d'état by the army with their internal support, followed by the establishment of a caretaker government. Within this provisional government, von Hassell was intended to take the post of Foreign Secretary. Although after 1943 he was no longer part of the inner circle of conspirators, Hassell was arrested after the attempt to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944. Sentenced to death, he was executed on 8 September 1944.

Both Graf and Hassell wrote about their lives in the resistance—this was the single subject of each entry. They wrote in a style of camouflage and suggestion. Dissident diaries under totalitarianism comprise an archive of conspiratorial talks and conversations and the Graf and Hassell diaries are no exception.<sup>28</sup> We can therefore call the mode that links the diaries of the two writers a 'counter-world of talking'. This may be the dominant writing mode of dissidents under totalitarianism in general. Records of meetings and talks run right through the two diaries. From these records, we can reconstruct the genesis and development of the conspirators' groups and plans. Some examples: 'Conversation with Hans Scholl. I hope I will meet him more often.' This meeting on 13 June 1942 was probably not the first between Willi Graf and Hans Scholl, but it is the first diary entry in the context of the Weiße Rose's leafleting campaign of June and July 1942. Graf continued his diary entries as follows: 'We talk a lot', or 'We have stimulating conversations until late into the night, with inter-

<sup>26</sup> All these auto-designations are used in Hassell's diary. Ulrich von Hassell, *Die Hassell-Tagebücher 1938–1944: Aufzeichnungen vom Anderen Deutschland*, ed. Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen with the assistance of Klaus Peter Reiss (3rd rev. edn. Berlin, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> In this respect Hassell's diaries reflect the attitudes and mentality of the dissident German upper class towards the Nazi regime. See Hans Mommsen, 'Geleitwort', in *Hassell-Tagebücher*, 11–18, at 12.

<sup>28</sup> Diaries written under totalitarianism provide a historically valuable archive which can complement the theory of totalitarianism by the addition of the aspects of privacy and resistance. Beyond their importance as documents they have a supra-individual or mental value as manifestations of humanism.

esting results', or 'The conversation is very fruitful, almost touching on matters of principle.' On 17 December 1942, Graf noted: 'Very interesting conversation with Huber.' It is believed that the subject of this conversation was the drawing up of leaflets and Professor Kurt Huber's contribution. At the beginning of 1943 the group started a new leafleting campaign and acts of resistance such as painting anti-fascist slogans on house walls. The preparation of these actions can be reconstructed from an increasing number of entries such as these: 'In the morning I am with Bollinger again for a good conversation', or 'Later we stay in the studio as guests for a long time and talk a lot, almost too much', or 'The conversation is lively and principled.'<sup>29</sup>

From the beginning similar records of conspiratorial meetings, talks, and conversations characterize the diary of Ulrich von Hassell. However, it contains a more differentiated lexical register since Hassell, an administrator, also used the jargon of his profession. Thus while Graf more or less confined himself to terms such as 'conversation' and 'talk', Hassell also used 'meeting' and 'discussion'. A few examples: 'Conversation with B[ruckmann] and Professor A. v. M[üller] concerning what one could do to express disgust at these methods'; 'A long, historical-philosophical conversation with Kehr'; 'We agreed on further meetings in Berlin'; 'Detailed, very objective and frank discussion'; 'Countless meetings in Berlin'; 'discussions at every opportunity'.<sup>30</sup> Such insinuations about conspiratorial communication continue right through Hassell's diary until the end.

<sup>29</sup> Willi Graf, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Anneliese Knoop-Graf and Inge Jens, introd. Walter Jens (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 37, entry for 13 June 1942: 'Gespräch mit Hans Scholl. Hoffentlich komme ich öfter mit ihm zusammen'; *ibid.* 43, entry for 21 July 1942: 'wir sprechen viel'; *ibid.* 48, entry for 23 Oct. 1942: 'Bis spät in die Nacht unterhalten wir uns sehr anregend und mit interessantem Ergebnis'; *ibid.* 85, entry for 5 Dec. 1942: 'Das Gespräch ist sehr ergiebig, fast grundsätzlich'; *ibid.* 88, entry for 17 Dec. 1942: 'Sehr interessantes Gespräch mit Huber'; *ibid.* 93, entry for 1 Jan. 1943: 'Vormittags bin ich wieder bei Bollinger zu einem guten Gespräch'; *ibid.* 96, 8 Jan. 1943: 'Später sitzen wir noch lange im Atelier als Gäste und reden viel, fast zu viel'; *ibid.* 96, 9 Jan. 1943: 'Das Gespräch ist lebendig und grundsätzlich.'

<sup>30</sup> *Hassell-Tagebücher*, 64, entry for 27 Nov. 1938: 'Unterhaltung mit B[ruckmann] und Professor A. v. M[üller], was man tun könnte, um den Abscheu gegen diese Methoden zum Ausdruck zu bringen'; *ibid.* 78, entry for 30 Jan. 1939: 'Mit Kehr langes historisch-philosophisches Gespräch'; *ibid.* 129, entry for 11 Oct. 1939: 'Wir verabredeten weitere Besprechungen in Berlin'; *ibid.* 133, entry for 22 Oct. 1939: 'Eingehende, sehr sachliche und offene Aussprache'; *ibid.* 348–9, entry for 14 Feb. 1943: 'In Berlin zahllose Besprechungen'; *ibid.* 366, entry for 9 June 1943: 'bei jeder Gelegenheit Aussprachen.'



'Talking', 'telling of', 'telling about', 'speaking to', 'speaking about', 'confirming', 'conversation', 'talk'—if there is one typical linguistic feature common to all dissident diaries, it is the frequent occurrence of designations such as these for communicative acts. Since communication is vitally important in constituting the status of dissident, confirming it to oneself and like-minded people, reflecting on it, planning campaigns, and, in brief, making conspiratorial dissent possible at all, it is obvious that communication is a central subject of dissident diary-writing. By contrast, the communicative acts of the regime's leading figures are the opposite of the 'democratic' communicative forms of talk and conversation. In line with the *Führerprinzip*, orders, instructions, propaganda slogans, and speeches are versions of authoritarian communication. Even what is called 'conversation', such as Hitler's 'table talks' ('Tischgespräche'), are the public monologues of a leader who does not allow the expression of other opinions.<sup>31</sup>

While the diaries of Graf and von Hassell are thus similar in their common focus on conspiratorial 'conversation', they can also be considered representative examples of different forms of resistance, and the different functions of diary-writing in Nazi Germany.

### 1. *Willi Graf: Economy of Concealment*

The phrase 'economy of concealment' perhaps best describes Graf's diary. This characteristic feature comprises verbal strategies of cover, suggestion, and coding. Graf's diary never exposes the Weiße Rose plan. With very few exceptions, such as 'Hans Scholl', Graf never explicitly mentioned names or details of the subjects and plans he was dealing with. For example, in order to avoid names, he made cryptic notes such as the following: 'In the early afternoon, I make an important visit; I get a quick response, and fundamentally we are in agreement'; or 'We talk a lot, and some good ideas are born.'<sup>32</sup> Graf kept secret who he visited on the 'important visit',<sup>33</sup> and the identity of 'we' was not revealed.

<sup>31</sup> See a number of entries in Albert Speer, *Spandauer Tagebücher* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> Graf, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, 93, entry for 31 Dec. 1942: 'Am frühen Nachmittag mache ich einen wichtigen Besuch, sehr rasch finde ich Widerhall und grundsätzlich sind wir uns einig'; *ibid.* 96, entry for 11 Jan. 1943: 'Wir reden viel und mancher gute Gedanke wird geboren.'

<sup>33</sup> The identity of this interlocutor could not be ascertained by the editors of Graf's diary, cf. *ibid.* 304.



Graf also used this avoidance strategy when referring to conversations and their subjects: 'Discussions about the structure; some ideas are new to me', or 'A visit to Fr., with whom some important things are to be discussed', or 'We start with a discussion whose main topic was our situation.'<sup>34</sup> 'Structure', 'important things', 'our situation'—such empty phrases were meant to disguise reality. They read like code words. In this respect, an entry such as 'I was late to bed that night'<sup>35</sup> demonstrates the highest level of coding—it is quite certain that this refers to the distribution of leaflets in the city of Munich that night.<sup>36</sup>

*Code words.* When Graf referred to subversive acts of resistance, he used two terms, 'plan' and 'work', which were typical of his private political language. In respect of the specific action—preparing the leafleting campaign—Graf noted: 'Visit Hans; I am still there in the evening; we really start work; the rock is beginning to move.'<sup>37</sup> It is assumed that on this day the group began to duplicate the leaflets and planned the distribution. This was the last Weiße Rose campaign at the University of Munich in February.<sup>38</sup> Further examples of the use of 'plan' and 'work' are: 'I am spending a great deal of time occupied with the plan', 'We worked hard today for some hours', and 'To fencing, a meal—roll call. At noon visited Hans. Did some writing during the

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 84, entry for 2 Dec. 1942: 'Gespräche über den Aufbau, manche Gedanken sind mir neu'; ibid. 84, entry for 4 Dec. 1942: 'Besuch bei Fr., mit dem einige wichtige Dinge zu besprechen sind'; ibid. 95, entry for 7 Jan. 1943: 'Wir beginnen mit einem Gespräch, in dessen Mittelpunkt unsere Situation stand.'

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 102, entry for 28 Jan. 1943: 'Die Nacht sieht mich spät im Bett.'

<sup>36</sup> The editors' commentary (ibid. 318) discusses Graf's interrogation about this entry: 'This entry, which undoubtedly refers to the distribution of leaflets in Munich's city centre, concurs with the time given by WG [Willi Graf] in his interrogation on 26 February 1943, in which, given the volume of evidence, he describes in detail his part in the distribution campaign. Similarly, the report sent by the Director of Public Prosecutions Munich I to the Reich Justice Minister on 5 February 1943 quite clearly refers to this campaign: "In the last few days, about 1,300 anti-Nazi, pro-democracy, and pro-federalism leaflets have been found on the streets of Munich" ('Dieser Eintrag, der sich mit Sicherheit auf die Verteilung der Flugblätter im Stadtkern Münchens bezieht, deckt sich mit WGs [Willi Graf's] Zeitangabe im Verhör am 26.2.1943, bei dem er angesichts der Beweislast seinen Anteil an der "Streu-Aktion" genau beschreibt. Auch die Meldung des Oberstaatsanwalts München I an den Reichsjustizminister vom 5.2.1943: "In den letzten Tagen wurden etwa 1300 Flugblätter antinationalsozialistischen Inhalts mit demokratisch-föderalistischer Tendenz auf den Straßen der Stadt gefunden", verweist eindeutig auf diese Aktion').

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 99, entry for 13 Jan. 1943: 'Besuch bei Hans, auch am Abend bin ich noch dort, wir beginnen wirklich mit der Arbeit, der Stein kommt ins Rollen.' There is no doubt that the phrase 'der Stein kommt ins Rollen' refers to the production of the fifth leaflet, see editors' commentary, ibid. 309.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. ibid.

evening. Work.<sup>39</sup> 'Work'—during the night of 8 February 1943 the group posted freedom slogans on buildings.<sup>40</sup>

*Private terms.* Another feature of Graf's language was his frequent use of the word 'sensible', especially in combination with terms such as 'conversations', 'discussions', and 'secret understandings'. A few examples: 'From time to time, a sensible conversation develops', or 'This afternoon quite sensible things are said; we understand each other', or 'a sensible discussion until late into the night', or 'After the meal, we have quite sensible conversations about our situation.'<sup>41</sup> 'Sensible conversation' had a special meaning in the context of dissident writing. Here it meant speaking disapprovingly about National Socialism and the war with a like-minded person.

To sum up a few observations concerning the style of Willi Graf's diary, 'economy of concealment' means to talk about subversive actions in the style of camouflage and suggestion, or by using special 'code words' such as 'work' and 'plan', or private terms such as 'sensible conversation'.<sup>42</sup> These characteristics refer

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 102, entry for 28 Jan. 1943: 'Viel Zeit geht damit vorbei, daß ich mich mit dem Plan beschäftige'; ibid.: 'Heute arbeiten wir einige Stunden angestrengt'; ibid. 106, entry for 8 Feb. 1943: 'Zum Fechten, Essen—Appell. Am Mittag Besuch bei Hans. Am Abend einiges geschrieben. Die Arbeit.'

<sup>40</sup> Cf. editors' commentary, ibid. 322: 'The painting of freedom slogans on buildings in the centre of Munich during the night from 8 to 9 February. In the interrogation of 26 February 1943 WG [Willi Graf] denied taking part in this campaign. But given the "existing points of reference" he had to admit his participation on 2 March 1943' ('Das Anbringen von Freiheitsparolen an Gebäuden in der Münchener Innenstadt während der Nacht vom 8./9. Februar. WG [Willi Graf] bestritt im Verhör vom 26.2.1943, bei dieser Aktion mitgemacht zu haben. Aufgrund "vorhandener Anhaltspunkte" mußte er aber am 2.3.1943 seine Teilnahme eingestehen').

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 72, entry for 3 Nov. 1942: 'Ab und zu kommt es zu einem vernünftigen Gespräch'; ibid. 92, entry for 30 Dec. 1942: 'An diesem Nachmittag werden recht vernünftige Sätze gesagt, wir verstehen uns'; ibid. 93, entry for 1 Jan. 1943: 'wir sprechen ein vernünftiges Stück bis weit in die Nacht hinein'; ibid. 103, entry for 30 Jan. 1943: 'Nach dem Essen kommen wir zu ganz vernünftigen Gesprächen über unsere Situation.'

<sup>42</sup> The use of code words and private terms is a crucial feature of diary-writing under totalitarianism in general. As life under totalitarian regimes is by definition life in a community, diarists, unless completely in agreement with the dominant ideology or utterly reckless, have to hide their individuality. Cf. Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*, 189–90: 'at times of an enforced "sense of community", a purely ideological notion of community which evades specific social demands in the age of industrialization or, like Communism, makes them absolute, the force of the individual personality is in every case reduced, or human beings are forced to live a "hidden" life of their own' ('In jedem Fall . . . wird der Mensch als Ich-Person in Epochen eines aufgezwungenen "Gemeinschaftssinns", einer rein ideologischen Gemeinschaftsvorstellung, die den konkreten sozialen Forderungen im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung ausweicht oder sie—wie der Kommunismus—verabsolutiert, in seiner Persönlichkeitskraft reduziert und zu einem "versteckten" Eigenleben gezwungen'). This 'hidden life of their own' takes place in the diary.

to the function which diary-writing had for Graf. Apart from the fact that diarists felt independent when facing their blank pages,<sup>43</sup> it may be supposed that diary-writing helped them in a special way. They used their diaries as intimate friends to whom moving and dangerous experiences could be confided, as Anne Frank, for example, told her secrets to her diary 'Kitty'.<sup>44</sup> However, unlike Hassell, Graf did not use his notes with the intention of gathering, keeping, and mediating contemporary history for future readers. For him, it was something individual and personal that helped him to bear the enormous pressure of dissident life under Nazi totalitarianism. In this respect, Graf's diary does not display the attributes of text known as 'self-description' ('Selbstdarstellung').<sup>45</sup> It seems that this function, a sign of real privacy, has less relevance under totalitarianism when the diarists live the highly political life of resistance members.

## 2. *Ulrich von Hassell: Generosity of Explanation*

'Generosity of explanation' is an appropriate description of the style of Ulrich von Hassell's diary. While Graf only hinted at the Weiße Rose campaign and its activities, von Hassell gave detailed descriptions of the emergence of his own and his friends' dissident thoughts, of the rise and fall of their expectations, and, finally, of their project to overthrow Hitler's government, although he did not imagine an organized and structured project.<sup>46</sup> Other important subjects of Hassell's diary are the group's members and, especially, their different intentions and ideas. Faithfully recording these thoughts and facts in his diary, Hassell used what we may call the itemizing language of a chronicler.

*Exposing the conspiracy.* Hassell started to write his diary in February 1938 when he was dismissed from his post as German ambassador in Rome. Even before that date he had made no systematic attempt to hide his critical attitude, and he referred to it

<sup>43</sup> 'Vor seinen weißen Blättern fühlt sich der Tagebuchschreiber unabhängig, auch wenn er Angst haben mag vor seinen wölfischen Mitmenschen. Seine Eigenmacht an Kritik wird bald zu einem vitalen Ereignis.' Ibid. 197.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 184 n. 2.

<sup>45</sup> See E. U. Große, *Text und Kommunikation: Eine linguistische Einführung in die Funktionen der Texte* (Stuttgart, 1976), 30ff.

<sup>46</sup> It is obvious that the rush of events often did not permit a thoroughly reflected arrangement of entries.



more openly in his diary.<sup>47</sup> During his lifetime he was accused of being too imprudent in his utterances.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Hassell's dissidence is expressed clearly in almost every entry,<sup>49</sup> for example, when he comments on *Reichskristallnacht*: 'I write under the oppressive impression of the malicious pursuit of the Jews after Rath's murder.'<sup>50</sup> At this period, in the autumn of 1938, the conservative resistance met for the first time,<sup>51</sup> and a few weeks after the November pogrom, Hassell was convinced of the need to take action. In 1939 he seemed to be ready: 'The entire situation leads me to the conclusion that it is high time to put on the brakes. My visitor was of the same opinion.'<sup>52</sup> The following pages of the diary reveal the history of the conservative resistance movement from the perspective of one of its most prominent members. It had a widespread and heterogeneous membership, and so had different ideas about how to subvert Hitler's regime and bring about a post-Nazi Germany. It maintained temporary connections with other movements, such as, for example, the Kreisauer Kreis. In his open style Hassell recorded, for example, the beginnings of this connection: 'I was always concerned that we had too little contact with younger groups. This desire has now been fulfilled, but it has also revealed great new difficulties. First I had a long conversation with Saler [Trott], in which he passionately advocated avoiding any semblance of "reaction", "gentleman's club", and militarism, internally and externally . . . Afterwards I met the clever, cultured Blum [Yorck] . . . With him, I continued the conversation with Geißler [Popitz]. Finally a few days ago . . . I went to him again. I found Hellmann [Moltke], Saler [Trott], and

<sup>47</sup> Von Hassell had been appointed German ambassador in Rome in 1932. Trying to influence Hitler's foreign policy from the start, he shared the illusion typical of many of Hitler's conservative allies, politicians such as Papen and Schacht, who unsuccessfully tried to steer him and later used this as a defence. See Mommsen, 'Geleitwort', in *Hassell-Tagebücher*, 11–18, at 12.

<sup>48</sup> See *Hassell-Tagebücher*, 28.

<sup>49</sup> Hassell tried to protect himself and his circle by constantly sending his diaries to Switzerland; alternatively, he hid them in his house, or buried them in the garden (see *Hassell-Tagebücher*, 28).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 62, entry for 25 Nov. 1938: 'Ich schreibe unter dem schwer lastenden Eindruck der niederträchtigen Judenverfolgung nach der Ermordung vom Rath.' The entry for this date also provides one of numerous proofs that Hassell's resistance to the Nazi regime had religious motivation. His aim was a return to Christian morality and a constitutional state.

<sup>51</sup> See Hans Mommsen, 'Bürgerlicher (nationalkonservativer) Widerstand', 57.

<sup>52</sup> *Hassell-Tagebücher*, 126, entry for 11 Oct. 1939: 'Die ganze Lage führt mich zu dem Schlusse, daß es hohe Zeit wird, den hinabrollenden Wagen zu bremsen. Derselben Ansicht war mein Besucher.'



Burger [Guttenberg] there, and all four (leader Saler [Trott]) worked on me with passion.<sup>53</sup> This entry is typical of Hassell's habit of making no secret of his own oppositional attitudes or the actions of the resistance movement.

*Code-naming.* When Hassell mentioned the group's members, he often assessed their reliability. For example: 'In the event of something happening, Terboven is someone of whom much can be expected'; or 'he [Stülpnagel] makes an excellent impression; not particularly important, but intelligent, clear-sighted, a good Prussian officer-type character'; or 'Zollerntal [Stauffenberg], whom I recently met at Nordmann's [Jessen's] and who made an excellent impression on me'.<sup>54</sup> From a linguistic point of view the entries referring to leading figures of the movement are interesting because Hassell vacillates between extreme carelessness and utmost caution in his use of personal names. Thus in 1939 he sometimes speaks of Goerdeler or Beck as 'my visitor' or 'my friend', while only a few pages later he openly names them: 'At noon I met Goerdeler. He has revised his rather wild plans.'<sup>55</sup> From about 1940 onwards, Hassell apparently tried to be more consistent in giving code names to the group's members. However, some of these are extremely easy to decode since they play on the semantic components of German family names. Thus Goerdeler is Pfaff (ibid. 210); Oster is Hase (ibid. 210); Witzleben is Scherz (ibid. 293); Gerstenmaier is Roggenmüller (ibid. 347);

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 289, entry for 21 Dec. 1941: 'Ich hatte immer etwas das Bedenken, daß wir zu wenig Kontakt mit jüngeren Kreisen hätten. Dieser Wunsch ist jetzt erfüllt worden; grade dabei haben sich nun neue große Schwierigkeiten gezeigt. Zuerst hatte ich ein langes Gespräch mit Saler [Trott], bei dem er leidenschaftlich dafür focht, nach innen und außen jeden Anstrich von "Reaktion", "Herrenclub", Militarismus zu vermeiden . . . Danach traf ich mit dem klugen, feingebildeten Blum [Yorck] zusammen . . . Mit ihm zusammen setzte ich das Gespräch bei Geißler [Popitz] fort. Schließlich ging ich vor einigen Tagen . . . noch einmal zu ihm, wo ich Hellmann [Moltke], Saler [Trott] und Burger [Guttenberg] fand und von allen vierten mit wilder Passion (Anführer Saler [Trott]) bearbeitet wurde.' As in this entry, Hassell often presents himself as a man of integration. This may be one reason for the lack of clear focus in his diary. Hassell's attention goes in many directions, and he tries to absorb and preserve every little detail of the resistance group and its history, thus losing sight of the bigger picture (see also below, n. 60).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 352, entry for 6 Mar. 1943: 'Terboven, von dem im Fall eines Falles allerhand zu erwarten ist'; ibid. 372, entry for 4 July 1943: '[Stülpnagel] der einen ausgezeichneten Eindruck macht: nicht überragend bedeutend, aber klug, klarblickend, guter Typ preußischer Offizier'; ibid. 418, entry for 7 Feb. 1944: 'Zollerntal [Stauffenberg], den ich neulich bei Nordmann [Jessen] kennenlernte und der mir einen ausgezeichneten Eindruck machte.'

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 126–7; 132, entry for 22 Oct. 1939: 'Mittags traf ich mich mit Goerdeler. Er hat seine etwas wilden Pläne revidiert.'

Falkenhausen is Adlerheim (ibid. 345); and Stauffenberg is Zollerntal (ibid. 410). Moreover, Hassell was inconsistent in his rather half-hearted attempts at disguise. Sometimes he simply forgot to use the code names; sometimes he used the first letter as an abbreviation; sometimes he invented different code names for the same person. Thus Langbehn was called Streitfuß (ibid. 340) or Kurzfuß (ibid. 346); Schulenburg was referred to as Lehrberg (ibid. 347), Sholslott (ibid. 348), or Castelloscuola (ibid. 358).<sup>56</sup> This technique of absent-minded code-naming was Hassell's only attempt to conceal the group's identity; in all other respects he used an open style.

*Bookkeeping of intentions and concepts.* From the beginning, Hassell was particularly open when he felt the need to comment on different intentions and concepts within the conservative resistance groups. This became even more apparent after the defeat of the German army at Stalingrad and the failure of the Russian campaign. In 1943–4 Hassell arranged his diary as if he were the accountant of the German resistance movement. The following examples are typical entries recording conflicts about strategies and leadership within the group: 'Nordmann [Jessen] recently had a violent argument with Hase [Oster], who accused him of pretending that his dreams were reality'; or 'Geißler [Popitz] is anxious about Pfaff's [Goerdeler] "parliamentary" methods. I also think that Pfaff is too much a man of outdated methods'; or 'There are strong conflicts within the inner circle because Geibel's [Beck] leadership has so far been too weak . . . Adlerheim [Falkenhausen] is often rejected'; or 'let down by all those in whom one had placed one's hope'.<sup>57</sup> Thus, in his diary, Hassell kept account of names, individuals, talents and abilities, and plans and projects. The ultimate aim of all these activities, the coup d'état against Hitler, it is true, was only alluded to in vague terms

<sup>56</sup> Hassell coded the names not only of his friends, but also of his main enemy, Hitler, who was called by his original surname, Schicklgruber, or Schickert (ibid. 285), or Inge (ibid. 410).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 356, entry for 28 Mar. 1943: 'Nordmann [Jessen], der neulich in heftigen Konflikt mit Hase [Oster] geriet, der ihm vorwarf, Wunschträume als Realitäten ausgegeben zu haben'; ibid. 415, entry for 27 Dec. 1943: 'Geißler [Popitz] ist besorgt wegen Pfaffs [Goerdelers] "parlamentarischen" Methoden. . . . Auch mir ist Pfaff zu sehr Mann der alten Methoden'; ibid. 345–6, entry for 22 Jan. 1943: 'Im inneren Kreise starke Gegensätze bei bisher allzu schwacher Führung durch Geibel [Beck]. . . . Adlerheim [Falkenhausen] wird vielfach abgelehnt'; ibid. 360, entry for 20 Apr. 1943: 'Alle, auf die man gehofft hatte, versagen.'

such as 'in case of something happening', or 'the central point'. Sometimes, too, Hassell used metaphorical language similar to that of Willi Graf, for example, when he spoke of 'putting the brakes on the moving vehicle'.<sup>58</sup> The main reason, however, why Hassell resorted to indefinite terms or metaphors when writing about the coup d'état was not to conceal clear-cut plans, but the indecisiveness and disagreement within the group itself about how to achieve Hitler's downfall. This applied especially to the main point of disagreement, namely, whether it was necessary to assassinate Hitler. The following seemingly cryptic entry reflects this dilemma: 'Pfaff [Goerdeler] once again returned to the question of whether it was possible to carry out the change without the elimination of Inge [Hitler]; Geibel [Beck] did not want to go in that direction. Nor did I.'<sup>59</sup> Apart from these vague references to the ultimate goal and how to achieve it, however, Hassell's writing style was more often the opposite. His diary provides concrete information about the group, its ideas, and activities, and can therefore be used today as an archive of the 20 July group and its history.

Comparing Hassell's diary with Graf's helps to account for the different motives for writing a diary which, in turn, led to differences of wording and style. Concerning the motives, I suggest that Hassell, unlike Graf, did not use his diary to compensate for the pressure of his dangerous activities. We should be aware of the different circumstances in which Hassell was active. He had to deal with a relatively widespread group of people and with complex ideas, and he and his circle also had the problem of how to translate their divergent plans into reality. Therefore Hassell, as an experienced politician, used his diary mainly to focus his ideas and reflect on people and plans. Since the diary's function for Hassell was to gain a general idea of the complex resistance group and its intentions, he turned to the language of accounting, bookkeeping, and faithful explanation which has just been described.<sup>60</sup> In addi-

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 'im Falle eines Falles'; ibid. 'Kernpunkt'; ibid. 'den hinabrollenden Wagen bremsen.'

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 410, entry for 5 Dec. 1943: 'Pfaff [Goerdeler] kam . . . wieder auf die Frage zurück, ob es nicht doch möglich wäre, den Wechsel durchzuführen, ohne daß Inge [Hitler] ausgefallen wäre; Geibel [Beck] wollte da nicht heran. Ich auch nicht.'

<sup>60</sup> A surviving member of the 'other Germany', Rudolf Pechel, assessed the value of the published diary and its author as follows: 'Hassell's diaries . . . have documentary value, even if a superfluity of detail prevents the bigger picture of the resistance and the intellectual forces active in it from emerging clearly. They reveal Hassell's noble personality, but



tion, Hassell was well aware of his role as a witness of contemporary history. He knew that as a historical agent, he was about to write—and thus make—history. Thus the idea that he was recording the history of the ‘other Germany’ for future historians and generations may have been a further strong motive for Hassell to reveal as much as possible, and cover up as little as necessary.

### III *Diary-Writing under the Sign of Persecution and Adjustment: The Diary of Victor Klemperer*

These two examples of dissident diaries will now be supplemented by discussion of the diary of an author who was persecuted during the Nazi period and had to come to terms with the subsequent totalitarian regimes. Victor Klemperer wrote under three different political regimes: Nazi totalitarianism; Soviet occupation; and socialist rule in the GDR. Of course, the subjects and style of Klemperer’s diary depend on each of these external conditions, although the thread of his linguistic observations runs throughout his diary for more than thirty years.<sup>61</sup>

*Chronicler of the catastrophe 1933–1945.* In 1933 Victor Klemperer continued his long-standing habit of keeping a diary. He wrote his diary as a scholar of language and literature, in 1933 as before. Looking at Klemperer’s intentions, we notice that they change with the increasing intensity of the regime’s influence on his life. Initially Klemperer refused to be a historian: ‘I am not writing a contemporary history here’,<sup>62</sup> he noted after the first three weeks of the National Socialist government. He preferred to write as he

also his limits’ (‘Die . . . Tagebuchblätter Hassells . . . haben dokumentarischen Wert, wenn auch eine Überfülle von Details die große Linie des Widerstandes und die in ihm lebendigen geistigen Kräfte nicht klar zum Ausdruck kommen läßt. Sie zeigen Hassells noble Persönlichkeit, aber auch seine Grenzen’). Rudolf Pechel, *Deutscher Widerstand* (Erlenbach, 1947), 227–8. Pechel, incidentally, was not sure whether Hassell was a member of the ‘other Germany’ at all, given that he remained ambassador in Rome, even in SA uniform, until his violent dismissal by Hitler. While it is certain that Hassell was a member of the ‘fighting Germany’ in his final years—‘history will decide whether he belonged to the “other Germany”’ (‘über seine Zugehörigkeit zum “andern Deutschland” wird die Geschichtsschreibung entscheiden’), *ibid.* 257–8.

<sup>61</sup> See Heidrun Kämper, ‘Das Sprach- und Kulturkonzept Victor Klemperers’, in Karl-Heinz Siehr (ed.), *Victor Klemperers Werk: Texte und Materialien für Lehrer* (Berlin, 2001), 53–69.

<sup>62</sup> Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten: Tagebücher 1933–1945*, ed. Walter Nowojski with the assistance of Hadwig Klemperer, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1995), i, 6, entry for 21 Feb. 1933: ‘Ich schreibe hier nicht Zeitgeschichte.’



had always done, that is, collecting notes for an autobiographical work which he called 'Curriculum Vitae'. As time went by, his notion that he was capable of maintaining a distance from the outside political world proved to be an illusion. Klemperer's efforts to exclude external political events were not successful, and with the onset of discrimination and suppression he became more ambitious. National Socialist politics, and the language of politics, increasingly became his main diary subjects. In 1934 he was dismissed from his post as Professor of Romance Literatures at Dresden university, and in 1935 he noted: 'The baiting of Jews has become so excessive. We expect to be murdered here in the near future.'<sup>63</sup> In 1940 he and his wife Eva had to give up their home and were committed to a *Judenhaus*. 'I should gladly like to write the cultural history of the present disaster',<sup>64</sup> was Klemperer's final objective in 1942. In fact, what he became was the cultural chronicler of the catastrophe from 1933 to 1945 under the sign of persecution, although he did not devote much space to expressing a fear of death. What is dominant is the will to report precisely what he observed around him in his daily life, as represented by the following entry: 'For the first time today, news of the deaths of two women in the concentration camp. . . . Both were . . . transported to Auschwitz, which seems to be a fast-working slaughter house.'<sup>65</sup> One of Klemperer's main reasons for writing a diary was, it seems, to maintain a distance from cruelty and inhumanity in order to retain his capacity to report. We recognize his strong will to resist Nazism as well as his awareness as someone who feels responsible for preserving history for posterity. Thus Klemperer's diary is not only a manifestation of 'inner emigration'. Above all, it is also a diary of critical observation and contemporary comment. His diary is a political chronicle. It documents the politicization of everyday life at the time of the Nazi dictatorship.

The precondition for this type of diary is, of course, that the subjects are not coded. We can underline this point by comparing

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. i. 212, entry for 11 Aug. 1935: 'Die Judenhetze ist so maßlos geworden. . . . Wir rechnen damit, hier nächstens totesgeschlagen zu werden.'

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. ii. 12, entry for 17 Jan. 1942: 'Ich möchte auch gar zu gern der Kulturgeschichtsschreiber der gegenwärtigen Katastrophe werden.'

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. ii. 259, entry for 14 Oct. 1942: 'Heute zum ersten Mal die Todesnachricht zweier Frauen aus dem KZ. . . . Beide wurden . . . nach Auschwitz transportiert, das ein schnell arbeitendes Schlachthaus zu sein scheint.'

Klemperer's diary with the two conspiratorial diaries by Graf and Hassell. Since Klemperer's diary is not conspiratorial, all forms of conspiratorial language are missing; he neither hides nor codes what he describes. His language is the overt language of description. This is the reason for a peculiarity of diary-writing under totalitarianism—the need to hide the diary.<sup>66</sup> In contrast to Hassell, who recorded neither a fear of discovery nor the places in which he hid his diary, Klemperer often felt anxious about being discovered, and he recorded this feeling.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, he continued, protecting himself either by hiding pages of his diary in a book,<sup>68</sup> or by sending the written pages to a friend, which placed his wife Eva's life in danger every time she took a new bundle of sheets away from home.<sup>69</sup> As hiding is a characteristic of diary-writing under totalitarianism, so the difficulty of retrieval is also typical. Klemperer seriously doubted that he would ever recover his manuscripts: 'Since we arrived here [in Falkenstein/Vogtland], my chances of surviving have probably risen to about 50 per cent. However, my manuscripts in Pirna, which include . . . all my work and diaries, I give a chance of 10 per cent at most.'<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> See Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*, 162ff. and 185.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. ii. 19, entry for 8 Feb. 1942: 'The fear that my writing could take me to the concentration camp. The feeling of a duty to write; it is my life's task, my profession. The feeling of *vanitas vanitatum*, of the worthlessness of my writing. In the end, I continue to write the diary, the Curriculum' ('Die Angst, meine Schreiberei könnte mich ins Konzentrationslager bringen. Das Gefühl der Pflicht zu schreiben, es ist meine Lebensaufgabe, mein Beruf. Das Gefühl der Vanitas vanitatum, des Unwertes meiner Schreiberei. Zum Schluß schreibe ich doch weiter, am Tagebuch, am Curriculum').

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. ii. 42, entry for 8 Mar. 1942: 'Now this diary page into the encyclopedia. . . . Putting it into Ziegler . . . I came across . . . the word "liberal"' ('Jetzt . . . dieses Tagebuchblatt ins Lexikon . . . Wie ich das Blatt . . . in den Ziegler lege . . . stieß ich . . . auf das Wort liberalistisch').

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. ii. 260–1, entry for 23 Oct. 1942: 'Tomorrow Eva wants to go to Pirna again . . . a number of things have to be taken out of harm's way— . . . above all my manuscripts of course.—Is it right that I burden Eva with this? In an emergency it would undoubtedly cost her life as well as mine. Today people die for less important things' ('Morgen will Eva wieder einmal nach Pirna . . . einiges ist in Sicherheit zu bringen — . . . vor allem natürlich meine Manuskripte.—Ist es recht, daß ich Eva damit belaste? Es würde im Notfall fraglos ihr Leben genauso kosten wie meines. Man stirbt jetzt um geringerer Sachen willen'). These doubts and twinges of remorse are not strong enough, however, for him to halt the dangerous undertaking. The dangers it poses becomes apparent when Eva is late: 'Eva not back yet, and the feeling of fear begins to increase. One says to oneself "It has always turned out alright", but one also says to oneself that it does not always have to' ('Eva noch nicht zurück, und das Angstgefühl beginnt zu steigen. Man sagt sich "Es ist noch immer gut gegangen", aber man sagt sich auch, es muß nicht immer gut gehen'). 27 Sept. 1944; ibid. ii. 596.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. ii. 691, entry for 7 Mar. 1945: 'Seit wir hier [Falkenstein im Vogtland] angekommen

Yet, 'Yesterday in the afternoon our surviving belongings from Pirna arrived here. They had their special angels. . . . Above all, the manuscripts have been preserved.'<sup>71</sup>

Victor Klemperer's diary is a testimony not only to contemporary history but also to language and everyday communication under totalitarianism. The most outstanding aspect is, of course, Klemperer's linguistic observations of the totalitarian regime. In chronological order he calls it 'language of the Third Reich', 'new language', 'language tertii imperii', and 'Lingua tertii imperii', until the name is finally found: 'LTI (nice learned abbreviation for Lingua tertii imperii, to be used in future).'<sup>72</sup> These linguistic records are concerned not only with the lexical aspects of the language of Nazism (such as reflections on 'charakterlich', 'fanatisch', 'kämpferisch', 'Gleichschaltung', and so on), but beyond this, and related to the subject of this essay, 'telling the truth'. Klemperer's diaries develop a strategy of revelation that provide evidence of the Nazis' systematic lies: 'The *Anzeiger* carries an article about the harvest, which glosses over indications of the direst need. "Worst fears" have not been realized, it suggests, but we must be very economical.'<sup>73</sup>

*Coming to an arrangement 1945–1949.* From 1945 to 1949, Klemperer wrote his diary while living under the Soviet military government and German Communist administration. Klemperer had already dealt with Communism in 1933, and in November of the same year he placed Communism and National Socialism into one and the same context: 'both are materialistic and lead to

men, dürften meine Chancen des Überlebens einigermaßen auf 50 Prozent gestiegen sein. Meinen Manuskripten in Pirna aber, die . . . alle Arbeit und alle Tagebücher umfassen, gebe ich höchstens 10 Prozent Chance.'

<sup>71</sup> Victor Klemperer, *So sitze ich denn zwischen allen Stühlen: Tagebücher 1945–1959*, ed. Walter Nowojski with the assistance of Christian Löser, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1999), i. 38–9, entry for 4 July 1945: 'Gestern nachm. kamen die überlebenden Sachen aus Pirna. Sie haben ihre besonderen Engel gehabt . . . Vor allem: die Mss. [Manuskripte] sind erhalten.'

<sup>72</sup> Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen*, i. 622, entry Zelle 898, 23 June–1 July 1941: 'Sprache des 3. Reichs', 'neue Sprache', 'Sprache tertii imperii', 'Lingua tertii imperii', 'LTI'.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. ii. 211, entry for 18 Aug. 1942: 'Der "Anzeiger" . . . bringt einen Artikel über die Ernte, der unter den nettesten Schönfärbungen krasse Not hervorstehen läßt. "Die schlimmsten Befürchtungen" seien nicht in Erfüllung gegangen, immerhin müsse sehr sparsam gewirtschaftet werden.' For further aspects see Heidrun Kämper, 'Zeitgeschichte—Sprachgeschichte: Gedanken bei der Lektüre des Tagebuchs eines Philologen. Über die Ausgaben von Victor Klemperers Tagebuch 1933–1945', *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik*, 24 (1996), 328–41.



slavery.<sup>74</sup> He was convinced of this, and, six weeks later, commented on the new party affiliations of his friends. One had become a National Socialist; the other a Communist. Klemperer saw both conversions as resulting in a loss of 'human dignity'.<sup>75</sup>

In 1945, dealing with Communism became an urgent concern for Klemperer as he himself now lived under Communist rule. Of course, he realized that the reality of Communism was the opposite of the pseudo-reality conveyed by the radio: 'Hardship, administrative chaos, daily violence, arbitrary acts by individual commanders, and official cases of plundering—all this shows that the reality is completely different from what is broadcast on the radio.'<sup>76</sup> During the initial post-war months, Klemperer intended to regain his professorship. He expressed, therefore, not only criticism but also an affinity with Communism. This created a typical state in which Klemperer fell between all stools: 'For myself, I am in a constant dilemma. I would like to be part of the extreme left wing of the KPD [German Communist Party]; I would like to be for Russia. But on the other hand: it is liberty that I mean.'<sup>77</sup> Klemperer felt that there was a true incompatibility between Communism and liberty, and he was therefore under intense pressure. In order to regain his professorship, he had to become a member of the German Communist Party. On the other hand, the Communist version of life without freedom made him hesitate: 'Am I a coward if I do not join . . . ; am I a coward if I do? Are my only reasons for joining egoistical? No! If I have to join a party, then this one is the lesser evil. It alone really presses for the radical elimination of the Nazis. But it is a new bondage in place of the old. However, this cannot be avoided at the moment.—But perhaps I am personally backing the wrong horse?'<sup>78</sup> 'Am I', 'are

<sup>74</sup> Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen*, i. 69, entry for 14 Nov. 1933: 'beide sind sie materialistisch und führen in Sklaverei.'

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. ii. 75, entry for 31 Dec. 1933: 'Beide sind . . . nicht einer politischen Partei beigetreten, sondern ihrer Menschenwürde verlustig gegangen.'

<sup>76</sup> Klemperer, *So sitze ich denn*, i. 138, entry for 8 Nov. 1945: 'uns wird hier doch durch Not, Verwaltungschaos, tägliche Ausschreitungen, Willkürakte einzelner Kommandanten, amtliche Plünderungen andauernd demonstriert, daß faktisch die Dinge ganz anders als im Radio beschaffen sind.'

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. i. 68, entry for 8 Aug. 1945: 'Für meine Person bin ich in stetigem Dilemma. Ich möchte an den linken Flügel der KPD, ich möchte für Rußland sein. Und andererseits: Freiheit, die ich meine.'

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. i. 146, entry for 20 Nov. 1945: 'Bin ich feige, wenn ich nicht eintrete . . . ; bin ich feige, wenn ich eintrete? Habe ich zum Eintritt ausschließlich egoistische Gründe? Nein! Wenn ich schon in eine Partei muß, dann ist diese das kleinste Übel . . . Sie allein

my', 'but', 'however', and 'but perhaps'—this is the language of someone trying to find a positive attitude towards problematic totalitarian appearances. Although torn by extreme doubts, finally, on 23 November 1945, Klemperer joined the German Communist Party. Nevertheless, his relations with the Communist Party remained reserved and critical. This is shown especially by the attention which he paid to the linguistic parallels between Communism and National Socialism: 'I must begin to pay systematic attention to the language of the Fourth Reich. It sometimes seems to me that it differs from that of the Third Reich less, for instance, than the Saxon spoken in Dresden differs from that spoken in Leipzig,'<sup>79</sup> he noted as early as June 1945.

The extent of his conversion is illustrated, for example, by his preparations for the publication of the linguistic notes which he had made during the Nazi period. The book is well known under the title *LTI: Aus dem Notizbuch eines Philologen*. In this respect, Klemperer's diary is a very specific case of what has been called 'diary-writing as work-in-progress'.<sup>80</sup> This refers to the reflections on the genesis of a work in diary entries. The work-in-progress of *LTI* is a case of adjusted historical writing. This means that there is a discrepancy between the diary version of *LTI* and the published version of *LTI*. This discrepancy, of course, was caused by the totalitarian government under which Klemperer lived as well as by his personal aims. Accommodation with the regime was the precondition for him to be able to publish and regain his professorship. The published version of *LTI* was shaped by deliberation and alignment with the new rulers, and this increased the value of the diary from which it was developed. The diary preserved the language of Nazism recorded immediately and directly and without the filter of deliberation.<sup>81</sup>

*Public supporter—private dissident: 1949–1959.* From 1949 to his death in 1960 Klemperer wrote his diary under socialist rule in

drängt wirklich auf radikale Ausschaltung der Nazis. Aber sie setzt neue Unfreiheit an die Stelle der alten! Aber das ist im Augenblick nicht zu vermeiden.—Aber vielleicht setze ich persönlich auf das falsche Pferd?

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. i. 26, entry for 25 June 1945: 'Ich muß allmählich anfangen, systematisch auf die Sprache des vierten Reiches zu achten. Sie scheint mir manchmal weniger von der des dritten unterschieden als etwa das Dresdener Sächsische vom Leipziger.'

<sup>80</sup> 'Diaristik als "Werkgeschichte"'. Hocke, *Europäische Tagebücher*, 336ff.

<sup>81</sup> See Heidrun Kämper, 'Sprachgeschichte—Zeitgeschichte: Die Tagebücher Victor Klemperers', *Deutsche Sprache*, 1 (2000), 25–41.

the GDR, while leading the double life of a public supporter and private dissident. As a public supporter, Klemperer was a candidate for the *Volkskammer* elections and, indeed, he was elected in 1950. In 1952 he was awarded the National Prize Third Grade for Art and Literature, something he had long coveted. Although Klemperer was a professed citizen of the GDR, as we see, he maintained a distance. 'Where is the truth?'<sup>82</sup> he asked in 1950. His habitual feelings of insecurity and doubt also motivated his diary-writing in the GDR. At the end of his life, Klemperer was irreconcilable with the *Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat*, the state of workers and peasants, as the GDR was known, and saw only continuity and parallels between Nazi and GDR totalitarianism. This inner distance towards the regime, which did not prevent him from belonging to the political class with pride, enabled him to continue his diary-writing.

Klemperer reflected upon the linguistic continuity between the two totalitarian systems. He described LQI (language of the Fourth Reich) as a version of LTI. As under the Nazi regime, he used his diary to record the linguistic traces of the new reality. Klemperer's diary continued to be a chronicle of contemporary politics, and especially its language. Germany was divided in 1949, and this was preceded linguistically when German territory was divided into zones of occupation. Thus even before 1949 Klemperer noted down the terms typically used in a socialist planned economy and working world ('Kombinat', 'Aktivisten', 'Werkstätige'); he registered the main terms of dialectic materialism ('Monopolkapitalismus', 'dialektisch', 'positiv'); and an implicit lack of understanding was expressed in the terse comment 'it used to be called "Collegium"', referring to the socialist term 'Kollektiv'.<sup>83</sup>

Beyond this, Klemperer's diary has a special contemporary history quality. From November 1945 he described the Cold War from the Eastern perspective in linguistic terms. 'The West'/'Der Westen' and 'over there'/'drüben' were the significant terms. There were also entries commenting on Western influence, for example, 'penetrating from the West: nuclear-biological-chemical weapons',<sup>84</sup> and linguistic techniques of suggestion in the Eastern

<sup>82</sup> Klemperer, *So sitze ich denn*, ii. 39: 'Wo ist Wahrheit?'

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. i. 404, entry for 4 July 1947: 'früher nannte man das Collegium.'

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. ii. 457, entry for 30-1 Oct. 1954: 'vom Westen eindringend: ABC-Waffen.'



language of propaganda: 'Incarceration—languishing: politicized and desensitized. Every politically unsound person in the Bonn republic is arrested and condemned, incarcerated, and languishes. In the same situation here: justly sentenced to prison, etc. Thus elevated language in the service of politics.'<sup>85</sup> Up to 1959 Klemperer constantly made such observations on the East–West division of Germany and its linguistic ramifications.<sup>86</sup>

In conclusion, Klemperer's diary style is the result of a typically German constellation. He wrote first in a state of persecution, then of arrangement, and finally while leading a double life. In view of these different conditions, Klemperer's diaries are an example of the continuity of private language as a version of political language under changing political circumstances. In Klemperer's case, this element of continuity was the attention he paid to linguistic phenomena in two different totalitarian systems. His awareness of language use was the factor that outlasted these changes. It was the 'balancing pole' which allowed him to withstand the challenges of the Age of Extremes.

#### IV Conclusion

We have examined three diaries written under the National Socialist and the Communist regimes. The only common trait that could be observed was the importance accorded by the authors to the subject of 'conversation' and, correspondingly, a high frequency of use of designations for communicative acts. Independently of this, the three diaries are typical of three different types of political language.

As a representative of the youth resistance movement, Willi Graf practised highly elaborated concealing strategies in his diary. He gave neither names nor details, and made extensive use of code words and private terms. These linguistic techniques corre-

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. ii. 741, entry for 20 Mar. 1959: 'Einkerkern—schmachten: politisiert u. abgestumpft: jeder politisch Mißliebige, im Bonner Staat verhaftet u. verurteilt, ist eingekerkert, schmachtet. In gleichem Fall hier: zur gerechten Strafe verurteilt, in Zuchthaus etc. Die gehobene Sprache also im Dienst des Politischen.'

<sup>86</sup> For this see Heidrun Kämper, 'LQI—Sprache des Vierten Reichs: Victor Klemperers Erkundungen zum Nachkriegsdeutsch', in Armin Burkhardt and Dieter Cherubim (eds.), *Sprache im Leben der Zeit: Beiträge zur Theorie, Analyse und Kritik der deutschen Sprache in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Helmut Henne zum 65. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 2001), 175–94.

sponded to the diary's function as a repository of private thoughts and feelings. Graf's diary is the testimony of a morally outraged contemporary who could not stand crime and injustice and who acted in accordance with his age and social position as a student.

As a member of the bourgeois, (national-)conservative resistance movement, Ulrich von Hassell had a semi-developed sense of the conspiratorial necessity for concealment. His diary is the testimony of someone who had a strongly developed awareness of his role as a historical agent, whose achievements were part of the better German history, and who therefore used linguistic strategies that revealed as much as possible and covered up as little as necessary.

As one of the few German Jews who survived the Nazi era thanks to his 'privileged' status, Victor Klemperer was the diarist with the least elaborated concealing strategies and with the most highly developed awareness of the conditions of everyday life under totalitarianism. This awareness made him an archivist of the linguistic manifestations of totalitarianism. As such, Klemperer had the self-confidence to see himself not so much as a victim but as a contemporary who was bound to bear witness.

Despite these differences all three diaries are manifestations of dissidence. All three authors, each in his own way, asserted their individuality under totalitarianism and thus defied the regimes' attempts to impose conformity. With respect to the definition of political language, it has become clear that even the apparently most private linguistic expression is a political speech act. We can therefore conclude that political language is used not only by politicians to transmit their political objectives to various audiences, nor only by those who support a particular political orientation.<sup>87</sup> Rather, political language is every kind of linguistic act

<sup>87</sup> See Peter von Polenz, *Deutsche Sprachgeschichte vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, iii. 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1991), 548: 'Political language refers not only to propaganda and "manipulation" of "below" by "above", but also to the linguistic behaviour of the masses which support a particular political direction on the basis of linguistic and political predispositions and expectations' ('Unter politischem Sprachgebrauch ist nicht nur Propaganda und "Manipulation" von "oben" nach "unten" zu verstehen, sondern auch das Sprachverhalten der eine politische Richtung mittragenden Massen aufgrund sprachlicher und politischer Prädispositionen und Erwartungen'). Linguistic research examines official political language under the headings of 'language of agitation', 'propaganda', 'persuasion', and 'semantic struggles'. For political language see Wolfgang Bergsdorf, *Politik und Sprache* (Munich, 1978); Walther Dieckmann, *Politische Sprache, politische Kommunikation: Vorträge, Aufsätze, Entwürfe* (Heidelberg, 1981); Josef Klein (ed.), *Politische Semantik:*

that applies to political realities. Hence, as an aspect of the history of political languages, the study of diaries can help to delineate the limits of totalitarian influence and to describe linguistic counter-discourses to totalitarian language.